

*Fighting for the U.S. Cattle Producer!*



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March 29, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
United States Secretary of the Interior  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

The Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) is a national, non-profit trade association dedicated to ensuring the continued profitability and viability of the U.S. cattle industry. R-CALF USA's membership consists primarily of cow-calf operators, backgrounders and stockers, and feedlot owners. Some of our members, and perhaps many, ranch on lands subject to your Order No. 3310, Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (the Wild Lands Order).

R-CALF USA submitted testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources concerning the March 1, 2011, hearing: *Full Committee Oversight Hearing on "The Impact of the Administration's Wild Lands Order on Jobs and Economic Growth."* That testimony is attached for purposes of encouraging you to make policy changes to reverse the decades-long effort by the U.S. Department of the Interior to deprive cattle ranchers of their vested water rights and grazing easements, which has contributed to the demise and exodus of U.S. ranchers throughout the West.

The problem we ask you to correct is that the U.S. Department of the Interior is renegeing on the federal government's promise to maintain and protect the vested and accrued property rights allocated generations ago to individual ranchers by the states and with Congress' consent. As a result, many ranchers are facing restrictions to, and/or a complete deprivation of, their ability to exercise their rights to water and graze livestock, rendering their ranches untenable.

We trust you will want to correct this unacceptable problem to ensure the sustainability of historical rangeland, economic viability of our nation's ranches, and economic vitality of the rural communities they support. Thank you for your consideration and please let us know how we can help facilitate needed changes to your Department of the Interior policies.

Sincerely,

Bill Bullard, CEO

Attachment